inorganic and biodegradable waste before dumping the garbage in dumping grounds;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether similar waste is being dumped in our rivers; and

(e) if so, the steps Government are willing to take to segregate garbage before dumping and allowing polluting our rivers?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) Government have notified the Municipal Solid Wastes (Management and Handling) Rules, 2000 vide S.O. 908 (E) dated 25th September, 2000 for effective management of the municipal solid wastes including garbage. The rules, *inter-alia,* specify that such wastes are to be segregated and stored separately into biodegradable wastes, recyclable wastes, and other wastes. Municipal authorities are required to organize awareness programmes for segregation of wastes and to promote recycling or reuse of segregated materials and also to undertake phased programme to ensure community participation in waste segregation.

(d) and (e) The local municipal authorities are responsible for the implementation of the provisions of Municipal Solid Wastes (Management and Handling) Rules and for any infrastructure development for collection, storage, segregation, transportation, processing and disposal of municipal solid wastes, including measures to prevent any contamination of ground water, surface water and ambient air quality. Dumping of garbage into rivers is not permissible.

Production/import of plastic

1895. SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 3760 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 25th April, 2003 and state:

(a) whether it is a fact that plastic/polythene is harmful to ecology, human beings and animals;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the production/import of plastic and polythene has gone up each year during last 3 years;

(c) if so, whether Government will assure that the production/import is reduced in the current and next year; and

(d) if so, how and to what extent, if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Plastics in general and Polyethylene in particular are chemically inert materials, used for the manufacture of a large number of consumer items. However, indiscriminate littering of plastics is known to cause adverse impacts on ecology, human beings and animals.

(b) Yes, Sir. As per the information provided by the Indian Center for the Plastics in the Environment, the production/imports of plastics have gone up during last three years.

(c) and (d) There is no such proposal with Government. However, to discourage indiscriminate littering and to promote proper collection, segregation, re-use and recycling of plastics, Government have taken several initiatives including the following:

(i) Recycled Plastics Manufacture and Usage (Amendment) Rules, 2003, have been notified (*vide* S.O. 689 (E) dated 17th June, 2003) to prohibit the manufacturing, stocking, distribution or selling of virgin or recycled plastic carry bags which are less than 8" x 12" in size and thickness less than 20 microns.

(ii) Import of Scrap plastic of non halogenated polymers and copolymers has been restricted under the Hazardous Wastes (Management and Handling) Amendment Rules, 2003.

National river conservation and other environmental schemes

1896. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of amounts released to various States under National River Conservation Programme and other environmental schemes for the years 1999-2000, 2000-2001 and 2001-2002;

(b) whether the State Governments of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka have forwarded any proposal for release of funds under National River Conservation Programme to take-up the work of Environmental Action Plan for Hyderabad and Bangalore cities; and